

**NORTH COUNTRY  
WRITTEN TESTIMONY**

My name is Clark J. Seaman.

I am the Republican Committee Chairman of Hamilton County.

I write today in support of the existing Assembly redistricting maps, which I believe are drawn in accordance with the laws of this State, whereas the proposed IRC draft plan appears to be drawn in violation of the current law.

Under the State Constitution, the Assembly map should promote the maintenance of existing districts, pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities, and towns, and of communities of interest. Under the current map, Hamilton County is completely contained within the 118<sup>th</sup> Assembly District.

However, under the IRC's draft plan, Hamilton County is now split between the 115<sup>th</sup> and 118<sup>th</sup> Districts. It would seem that dividing up Hamilton County violates the principle of keeping counties intact.

Hamilton County is the core county of the Adirondack Region, yet the draft plan combines its Adirondack community with Cooperstown in the Catskills. A 5,000 plus community in the Adirondacks deserves to be kept intact to ensure its voice is consistent with the fact that it is one of the largest counties in the state and the only one without a stop light.

Under the Constitution, each district shall be as compact in form as practicable and consist of contiguous territory. In the current Assembly Map, the 118<sup>th</sup> Assembly District is as compactly drawn as possible. In the draft plan, the districts look like a jigsaw puzzle with Hamilton County divided in the middle.

Districts cannot be drawn to discourage competition or for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring incumbents. It would appear that the draft IRC map was drawn to disfavor incumbency since the current representative of the 118<sup>th</sup> District has been drawn out of his district and placed into another district. The current Assembly map is a better example of one that promotes competition and consistency in representation when compared to the IRC plan.

I hope the Commission will keep in mind that the invalidation of the Assembly Redistricting maps was based on a flawed process. The Court determined that the maps drawn by the NYS Legislature didn't follow the Constitutional process and didn't come from the Commission. However, the Assembly Maps drawn by the Legislature did a better job of respecting municipal boundaries, particularly County Boundaries in our area. Hamilton County should be treated as an important unit and kept intact. All the Hamilton County Towns have far more in common with each other than they do with Plattsburgh or Cooperstown, just as two examples of what happens in splitting the County up in the new maps.

As previously noted, Hamilton County is the only county without a traffic light. With a population of just over 5000, it is the least populated county east of the Mississippi. It is also one of only two Counties that is located wholly within the Adirondack Park BlueLine. With redistricting comes the risk that we can become the "unwanted stepchild" of any new district. Dividing the county in two creates the greater risk that we will become the "unwanted stepchildren" of two separate districts. I strongly urge the Commission to reconsider this plan and leave Hamilton County intact within the existing 118<sup>th</sup> District.

Questions for the Commission:

Can you please provide an outline of the input and meetings that took place prior to the release of the draft map on December 1, 2022?

How many times did the Commission meet prior to releasing a draft map?

How is this draft map different from the 2021 draft plan which was resoundingly rejected by the Legislature?

Can you outline the IRC's next steps between the conclusion of the public hearings and the release of the first plan which is expected in April of this year?

DONALD W. BILOW, Supervisor

*Oldest Town in Franklin County*

**TOWN OF CHATEAUGAY**

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Phone: (518) 497-6067

Superintendent  
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ROGER LABOMBARD  
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Town Assessor and  
Code Enforcement Officer  
(518) 497-6931 Ext#3

Tax Collector  
LYNN HARRIGAN  
(518) 425-6633

January 25, 2023

New York State Independent Redistricting Committee

Re: Redistricting NY Assembly District 115

To: Independent Redistricting Committee

The Town of Chateaugay as a community of interest is strongly opposed to dividing Franklin County into two assembly districts.

The Town of Chateaugay works with all of the nineteen towns in the county. We have common goals and desires. We all work hard to achieve common goals related to health services and community support such as:

- A) County wide ambulance services.
- B) Keeping Alice Hyde hospital as a functioning health care facility.
- C) County wide emergency services based in Malone, it would be a travesty to break the county into two districts.
- D) We have common areas of interest regarding the cultural and recreational areas of all the communities in the county.
- E) We share highway resources with the county highway department and all of the nineteen town in the county.

Chateaugay has a recreation park that is visited by many citizens of surrounding towns. We have a wonderful summer program at the recreation park, swimming, baseball, softball, little league games and other sports. The park also host summer gatherings, concerts, dinners, fund raisers and other gatherings which are attended by people from all over northern New York, Canada and the USA.

We feel that it would be a disservice to divide Franklin County into two assembly districts when all of us work closely together for the common good of the citizens of Franklin county.

The Town of Chateaugay expresses its strong opposition to dividing Franklin County into two assembly districts.

Respectfully,



Donald W. Bilow,  
Supervisor

## Redistricting Commission Testimony, 2/1/23

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I am Gerald Delaney, Town Councilman in the Clinton County Town of Saranac. Also, the Executive Director of the Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board. I had planned to speak in person, as that gives one a chance for eye contact and humanize the speakers and the Commissioners. The process of getting signed up was far from perfect. The website would not allow me to sign up. I took the step to email one of the listed Employees and it was followed up by another employee. After a couple of emails, and the dead line approaching staff signed me up. Actually, this entire process seems a little disenfranchising for many of us in Northern New York. We really only had 2 choices for public hearing participation. Either a 2.5-hour drive to Albany, or a 4.5-hour drive to Syracuse. Is the message? If you do not live on or near the I 90 Corridor, in one of New York's larger cities, or the New York City area or Westchester area, access to these hearings is less important? Then the winter storm came, better judgement told me to not try and drive over 5 hours during the peak of the storm. As a 9 to 10 hour round trip seems particularly burdensome, I am choosing to no longer plan in person testimony. I was offered a zoom link, after watching the Buffalo Hearing, where one zoom participant audio was broken up, zoom has its limits, and is far from perfect. The idea of testifying and technology breaking down is not appealing.

As the Drama unfolded last year over redistricting, I looked at the assembly maps prior to your work. The gerrymandering was head scratching worthy. The Congressional and Senate maps were easy to figure out why there was a court challenge. However, the Assembly maps seemed to make sense. They mostly followed County lines. They were compact for Adirondack districts standards. You could drive 2 hours and get from one corner to another. Counties like St Lawrence that previously had 4 Assembly members was reduced to 2 Assembly members.

Adirondack Counties are like a Town in larger urban areas. It is important to the Leaders and residents of Counties that they are represented by the same Assembly member. We have Counties that historically never been split, and Counties where people are never sure who represents them due to constantly shifting lines.

Let us take the 115. Currently, it has all of Franklin and Clinton Counties, it also has for the first time all of the Village of Saranac Lake. The Village is in 3 Towns and 2 Counties. Traditionally that Village had 2 Assembly members. It is clearly a community of Interest. It is Economically tied with Tupper Lake and Lake Placid. Which for the first time in my knowledge is all in the same Assembly district. You have been hearing this already, many are happy with the current districts. What do I see wrong with your 115? It is no longer compact. You removed the northwest corner of Franklin County; you replaced it with the rest of Essex County and 2 Towns in Hamilton County. Your map reduces constituents' ability to have access to their Assembly member. Instead of a roughly 2-hour drive from the furthest points of the district. With your suggested map, that drive will be around 3 hours. The added drive time will reduce the Events the Assembly member can attend, thus reduce access. The fact that the events will be 2 Counties away, it is unlikely many constituents would know about events where they could interact with their Assembly member. Historically the people of the Adirondacks feel marginalized in the political process due to low population. I ask you to not further marginalize the people of the Adirondacks with Assembly Districts that are not as compact as Possible.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet reads Districts must consist of contiguous territory and shall be as compact in form as practicable;
- 5<sup>th</sup> bullet reads The maintenance of existing districts, pre-existing political subdivisions, including counties, cities, towns, and communities of interest.

My ask of you? Emulate the current districts as much as possible. If I were to draw a map of the 115<sup>th</sup> as a suggestion to the Commission, it would look like the current district. It would be all of Clinton and Franklin Counties. It splits Essex, the Towns of St. Armand, North Elba, Wilmington, and Keene. The tri Lakes region, Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake, Lake placid, and the Essex Counties Towns north of the high peaks are intertwined as Communities of interest and economically. Many in the Adirondacks feel the same way about their Assembly districts. Thank you for your work on a thankless but important job.



Joint Council for Economic Opportunity  
of Clinton and Franklin Counties, Inc.

January 25, 2023

“Tight knit” doesn’t quite scratch the surface when describing the North Country. “Tight knit” doesn’t encompass the generations of farmers, contractors, and manufacturers that have raised their children together – it doesn’t encompass the hundreds of local men and women who volunteer with their local fire stations and EMS – it can’t describe the symbiotic relationship towns have with one another. Clinton and Franklin Counties together model the closeness of the North Country community. Indeed, both counties share small local chains, like Giuseppe’s pizza, which has locations in Plattsburgh, Keeseville, Dannemora and Malone, or Nuway Car Wash, with locations in Plattsburgh and Malone. Community Action Agencies, as well, recognize the sisterhood of the two counties by servicing both. JCEO, Friends of the North Country, and United Way of the Adirondack Region are just a few of the local nonprofits that work in both counties. JCEO alone has more than 20 locations throughout the region.

Notwithstanding the small urban center of the City of Plattsburgh, both counties also face the same challenges many rural communities face. In Clinton and Franklin Counties, the annual median income is \$60,285 and \$55,279, respectively – more than \$14,000 below state average of \$74,315. Poverty rates are also above the state average, with Clinton at 16.1% and Franklin at 18.4%. Low and stagnant wages, coupled with minimal walkability within the counties and very little public transportation, make the cost of fuel and transportation a heavy burden for these communities to bear.

At JCEO, we are seeing an increasing numbers of households looking for aid as they find they cannot bear the burden of the rising cost of food, fuel, and transportation. In 2022 we provided more than 14,000 rides to individuals in both counties who would have otherwise been unable to make it to medical appointments. We served almost 10,000 families in both counties, with food, clothing, toiletries, and other valuable resources.

To those of us who live and work here, it is clear both counties benefit from sharing a district. It would be irresponsible to carve them apart.

Nicole Laurin  
CEO

 **CLINTON COUNTY**

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 **FRANKLIN COUNTY**

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Phone: 518-483-7022 | Fax: 518-483-3129  
[www.jceo.org](http://www.jceo.org)



My name is Brian E Wells

I am the Chairman of Hamilton County

I testify today in support of the existing Assembly redistricting maps, which I believe are drawn in accordance with the laws of this State, whereas the proposed IRC draft plan appears to be drawn in violation of the current law.

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Thank You

Brian E Wells- Supervisor Town of Indian Lake

Chairman Board of Supervisors of Hamilton County

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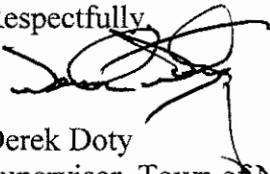


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MARK SCHACHNER  
ATTORNEY FOR THE TOWN

January 25, 2023

Please accept this letter in support of the existing boundaries of assembly district #114. The primary reason centers around the fact that the greater tri-lakes area of Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake are now encompassed within one district, instead of previously two. This resort area of the Adirondacks mutually share so many services that one district can represent that population more effectively. Just to mention a few, please consider; schools, healthcare, housing initiatives, economic development initiatives, tourism/event destinations, and many more. The current boundaries work.

Respectfully,

  
Derek Doty  
Supervisor, Town of North Elba